

has been working with Senator ROCKEFELLER, and they have done what has been good work. There has been very little infighting between them.

The Attorney General of the United States, newly selected, has said he will launch an inquiry. We will see what this inquiry will be. I expect both the Intelligence Committee and the Attorney General of the United States to investigate aggressively the answers to questions regarding this coverup.

But the CIA, the Justice Department, the Bush White House, every American should know that if these investigations encounter resistance or are unable to find the truth, I will not hesitate to add my voice to those calling for a special counsel. For example, this weekend, JOE BIDEN, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, called for a special prosecutor. He may be right. I am willing to wait and see what develops before I join in that call.

We must take every step necessary to protect our country's integrity and defend this country's great moral responsibility and authority that we have.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

MOVING FORWARD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me say I share the view of the majority leader that there is clearly a way forward on the farm bill. We are now making substantial progress and should be able to complete that bill in the near future.

Also I think there is a way to get a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act measure out of the Senate that could be signed by the President.

With regard to the remaining efforts here on the spending issues, it is, indeed, hard to understand the complaints we are hearing from the other side on our supposed lack of compromise on spending. We have sought actually compromises all year in dozens of appropriations committee and subcommittee hearings, which is the normal process. But we are now a quarter of the way into the fiscal year. Responsible people understand the time to get the work done is now. As the majority leader indicated, Christmas is 2 weeks from today. We can keep going back and forth with the House maybe endlessly. But that would only further delay our fundamental responsibility of getting these spending bills signed into law.

So what is the way to do it? The way forward: Let's protect the taxpayers' wallets, fund the troops, and end this otherwise unproductive exercise.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for 60 minutes with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I believe we have two speakers on our side in morning business this morning. I would ask unanimous consent that I be allotted 15 minutes of that, and Senator GRAHAM from South Carolina be allotted the second 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about an issue that should be the first priority of this Congress, and that is to fund our troops during a time of war, to make sure they have the funds they need, to have the equipment, to have logistical support and other support they need in order to fight this global war on terrorism.

There have been a lot of rumors circulating around Congress about what the way forward is going to be on the appropriations—I can only call it a mess—that confronts us when only 1 appropriations out of 12 bills has been signed by the President.

Yesterday I heard the reports for the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, DAVID OBEY, which said he was pulling the proposed omnibus appropriations bill because he was upset with negotiations on that.

He said this—and this is the one part I do agree with—

I want no linkage whatsoever between domestic [spending] and the war. I want the war to be dealt with totally on its own. We shouldn't be trading off domestic priorities for the war.

I would rephrase that that we should not be doing anything to tie the fate of our troops to wasteful pork projects or excessive Washington spending.

I am glad to see the distinguished majority whip on the floor because I do have a unanimous consent request that I know he will be interested in.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2340

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 484, S. 2340. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, I ask unanimous consent that the remarks I am about to make not be taken from the time allotted to the Senator from Texas in terms of morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object—and I will object to this request—let me say at the outset that what the Senator has asked for is to return to a bill which was considered by the Senate on November 16, 2007. There was a failure of a cloture vote, which is a vote requiring 60 Senators to vote affirmatively before the bill goes forward. The final vote was 45 to 53. In fact, three Republican colleagues of the Senator from Texas joined in opposing that cloture vote. This is a Senate appropriations bill. As the Senator from Texas knows, the Constitution requires that spending bills originate in the House. So the House would either object or ignore this bill or blue slip the bill in a way that would mean that whatever we would do here would not achieve the result asked for by the Senator from Texas.

As of today, we have lost 3,888 American lives in Iraq. The amount of money which we have provided, according to the administration, would allow them to continue the war at least to the end of March and perhaps beyond. So the troops are not without the resources they need. What the Senator from Texas has proposed is an approach which is on its face unconstitutional and has been rejected by the Senate on November 16, including three Republican Senators. For that reason, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. CORNYN. I differ with the distinguished Senator from Illinois. Obviously, the bill that was voted on earlier contained numerous restrictions and deadlines on deployment of our troops in Iraq. For that reason, cloture was denied. It is not that there wasn't support. Indeed, I would hope there would be unanimous support to make sure our troops get the emergency funding they need in order to continue military operations until such time as Congress can appropriate the remainder of the President's request of \$196 billion.

It is important to note that this is emergency bridge funding for the troops. While I don't disagree with the distinguished Senator from Illinois that the military can borrow from Peter to pay Paul and move funds around within their budget to avoid disaster up until about mid-February, the fact is, the White House has now warned that 100,000 civilian jobs depend on this emergency funding.

Here is a story from the Army Times dated December 10, 2007, that says the Department of Defense is sending notices of layoffs this week—2 weeks before Christmas—to 100,000 civilian employees warning them, unless Congress